

# Focus on Language and Communication

Supporting Stage 2 students  
with language difficulties

September 2012

## Workshop outcomes

You will:

- ❑ Reflect on how **you** talk to students who have language difficulties
- ❑ Be aware of some of the ways to help your students 'get smart'
- ❑ Revisit and/or expand your repertoire of strategy knowledge to make appropriate choices to best help students with language difficulties to better access the curriculum

## Before you start ...

- Important to have data to determine measures of success:  
formal & informal reporting purposes  
to facilitate teacher & student feedback
- Important to know which students you will need to provide the most support
- Keep in mind that this is a long, slow journey; but an important one. Society expectations of language use are higher than a generation ago. Demands of new curriculums. NAPLAN

# Part 1

# Teacher talk

## Part 1: Teacher Talk

### Activity:

1. Read the newspaper article.
2. Reflect & record the implications for *students and teachers*.
3. Share your thinking.

## Part 1: Teacher talk

How do we **avoid** creating 'a sea of blah'?

- Alert the student to listen
- Short and sharp delivery of oral information
- Support the teacher talk
- Support and develop student talk

## Part 1: Teacher talk

# Prompting a response:

- Binary choice
- Phonemic cue
- Sentence completion
- Supply key words
- Peer modelling
- Delayed imitation
- Direct imitation
- Non-verbal cues
- Verbal cues
- Sabotage

## Part 1: Teacher talk

- Reflection & 'note to self'

*When talking to a child with a language difficulty, what do you consider to be **the most important things** to remember?*

*Record on front page of handout.*





## Part 2

# ‘Getting smart’

## Part 2: 'getting smart'

Smart is not something  
you are...

smart is something you  
get.

## Part 2: 'getting smart'

# What do 'smart kids' know how to do?

(pair-share)

- How to get themselves organised
- To listen effectively
- Make connections
- Reflect on their learning
- Have a belief in themselves as learners
- Ask for assistance/clarification when they need it
- Work co-operatively
- Work independently
- Make and maintain friends
- Remember what the task involves
- Understand the idioms and the nuances of language
- Don't have learned helplessness

## Part 2: 'getting smart'

# How can children 'get smart'?

- ❖ They need to hang around with people who are already smart
- ❖ They need to hang around with people who believe **they** can get smart
- ❖ They need to be taught **how** to be successful – *it's a teacher's job*
- ❖ They need intense, demanding and enriched curriculum
- ❖ Delivered by knowledgeable and committed teachers

Make explicit the things that 'smart kids' do implicitly.

What skills would you choose?

## Part 2: 'getting smart'

### ○ Getting organised

#### Getting Organised



sharp pencil



rubber



glue stick



ruler

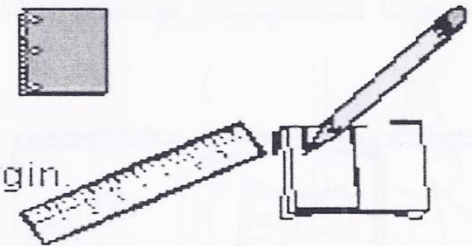
### ○ Remembering what to do

#### Start your work.

1. Find my book.



2. Rule a 2cm margin.



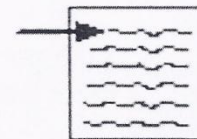
3. Write the heading. *Early Settlement*

4. Underline the heading. *Early Settlement*

5. Read the instructions.



6. Start work.



## Part 2: 'Getting smart'

### ○ Effective listening



### Talking Partners

1. Turn & look



2. **Take turns to talk**



3. **Listen when your partner talks to you**



4. **Ask questions**



5. **Share with the class**



## Part 2: 'Getting smart'

### Other learning behaviour supports:

- **Narrative of what the learning should look like.**  
Capitalise on visitors.
- **Buddy support.** Learning partner. Notepad.
- **'Phone a friend'.** It's Ok to ask someone else to help you. Look at how your partner is doing the task.
- **Reflection.** How did I go today? What activity did I do well? How do I know I am 'getting smarter'? If there is no response, tell them hence the importance of data.
- **Specific rewards.** Reward cards. Thank heavens for stickers!



## Part 2: 'Getting smart'

I follow my teacher's Instructions

 good choice     poor choice    Week

Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		



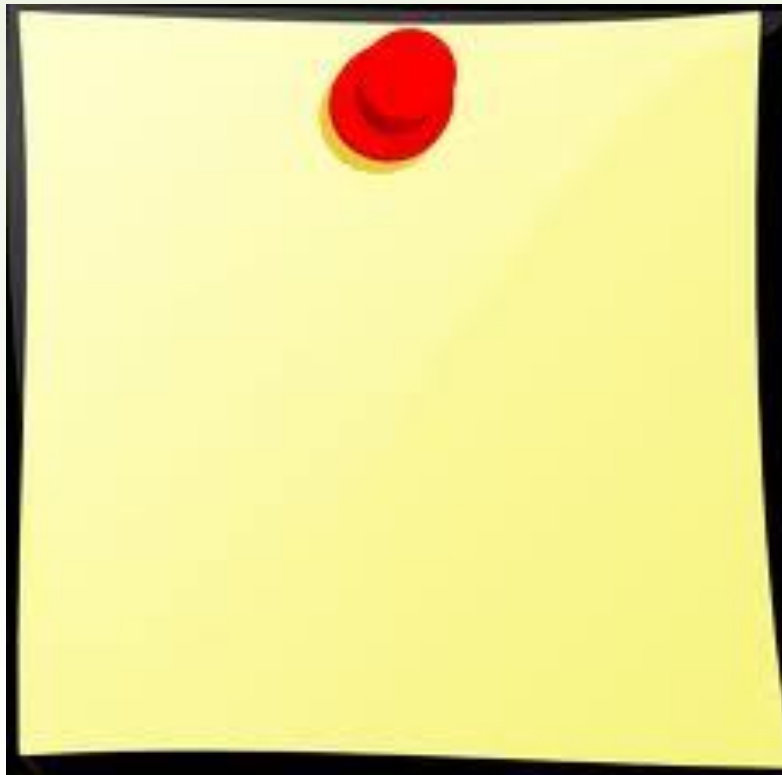
- I asked for help...
- I put my hand up in class...
- I started my work ...
- I looked at my speaker...

## Part 2: 'Getting smart'

### Reflection & 'note to self'

*What do you do or could do, to make your students believe they are 'smart'?*

*Record on front page of handout.*



## PART 3

# Teaching strategies to facilitate curriculum access & participation

# Relevant Research

## The 4 Roles of the Reader

**Scott Paris 2005**

### Constrained

Phonics, Phonemic awareness, concepts about print

and

### Unconstrained skills

Reading texts, comprehension, vocabulary,

Role's Name	Focus	Examples
Code-breaker	Knowing about and using the nature and contents of the relationship of spoken sounds in the language to the graphic symbols used to represent those sounds, and basic visual aspects of textual formatting	Sound-letter correspondences, phonemes relevant to English, punctuation, decoding the elements and structural compositions of pictures and graphic displays, hotlinks on web pages
Text-participant	Knowing about and using the meaning patterns operating in the written texts, participating in the ongoing construction of the text's meaning as a collection of propositions	Participating in the stated and unstated patterns of information that hold the text together, including vocabulary knowledge, and capitalising on syntactic knowledge to build a representation of the significance and implications of a text
Test-user	Knowing about and using the social and cultural functions of various kinds of reading and writing practices, building into a repertoire of purposeful and effective communications	The form-function relationships of various genres and the sociocultural, positional expectations associated with different kinds of written and visual communications
Text-analyst	Entail knowing about and using the cultural and ideological bases on which texts are written and put to use to mobilise opinion and standardise interpretation	How texts differentially position readers, and how they use various sociocultural categories, evident in linguistic and visual media, to constrain interpretation and influence the reader

(adapted from Freebody & Luke, 1990; Freebody, 2004; Luke & Freebody, 1997, 1999).

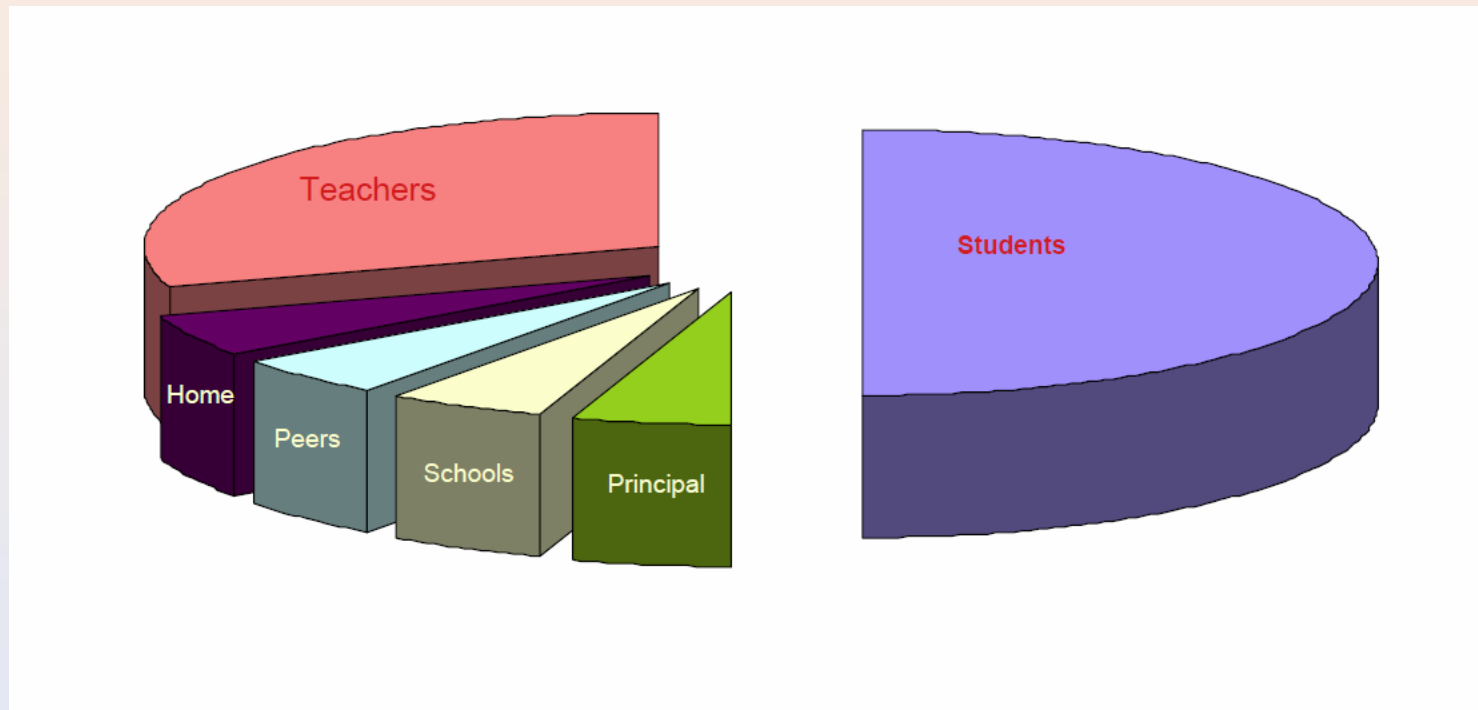
# Hart & Risley research

Children enter school with "meaningful differences" in vocabulary knowledge.

Family Status	Quantity of Words Heard in an hour	Quality of Words Heard	Words heard in 4 years	Children's cumulative vocabulary
Welfare	616	5 affirmations, 11 prohibitions	13 million	500
Working Class	1251	12 affirmations, 7 prohibitions	26 million	700
Professional	2153	32 affirmations, 5 prohibitions	45 million	1100

# John Hattie 2003

- Teachers Make a Difference



# The Challenge...

to select **texts and tasks** that are:

- age-appropriate
- conceptually challenging
- interesting enough to intrigue and motivate -illustrations
- facilitate extended treatment to allow deeper interaction
- worthy of promoting a ‘sea of student talk’-vocab rich
- Diverse, so to introduce students to an array of authors, text structures and purposes
- well-suited to teaching specific comprehension skills and strategies

Yesterday I saw the palgish flester gollining  
begrunt the bruck. He seemed very chanderbil,  
so I did not jorter him, just deapled to him  
quistly. Perhaps later he will besand cander,  
and I will be able to rangel to him.

1. What was the flester doing, and where?
2. What sort of flester was he?
3. Why did the writer decide not to jorter  
him?
4. How did she deaple?
5. What did she hope would happen later?

SCORE:

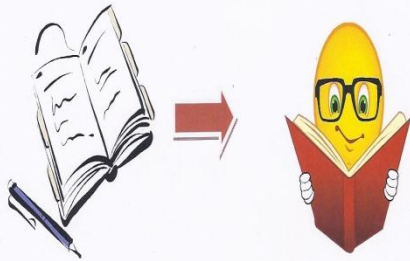


# Which strategies?

- Making connections
- Questioning
- Visualising
- Comparing/contrasting
- Summarising
- Predicting
- Monitoring
- Reading new words

## Making Connections

# Text-to-self



What does this remind me of in my life?

What is this similar to in my life?

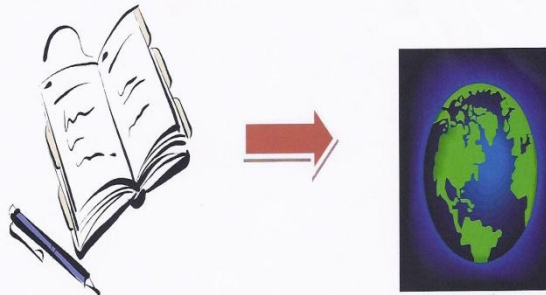
How is this different from my life?

Has something like this ever happened to me?

Does this relate to my life?

## Making Connections

# Text-to-world



Does this remind me of something happening in the world (something I have seen on television etc)?

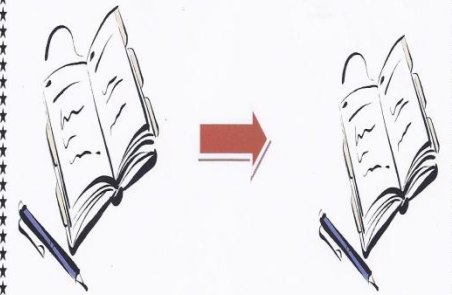
How is this text similar to things that happen in the real world?

How is this different from things that happen in the real world?

How did that part relate to the world around me?

## Making Connections

# Text-to-text



Does this remind me of another text I've read?

Have I read anything similar to this text before?

Have I read something on this topic before?

Have I read any other books by this author/illustrator?

# Questioning

Learners pose and answer questions that clarify meaning and promote deeper understanding of the text. Questions can be generated by the learner, a peer or the teacher.

<http://www.nlnw.nsw.edu.au/videos11/questioning/flv/questioning.html>

# Predicting

Learners use information from graphics, text and experiences to anticipate what will be viewed/read/heard and to actively adjust comprehension while reading/viewing/listening. Before reading record words you think you will read in the text. Check off as the text is read. After reading discuss WHY some words did not appear.

# Monitoring

Learners stop and think about the text and know what to do when meaning is disrupted.

Coding.

# Summarising

Highlight key words. Write a summary using the key words.

# Visualising

Mind mapping. Sketching. Drawing and labelling



## Think, Pair, Share

Think of something you have done where bringing the steps together in the right sequence was important. Turn to a partner and talk about it. What words will you use to start each step? How does thinking about your experience help you understand *Rafting the River*?

# Rafting the River

**W**hite-water rafting is great fun, but keeping safe is important. One rafter explains how she gets ready for the ride of her life.

First we all put on wetsuits. Miriam says it will keep me warm when I'm in the water.

Next comes the life jacket. It's **bulky**, but if I fall in, the jacket will help me float.

Then there's the helmet. There's a lock hidden under the white water. I keep my helmet on at all times.

Now comes the dry-river run. We use our paddles and pretend that the river is a dry river. Our guide helps us to get working together and explains how he'll be using to help us steer.

At last he yells, "OK, now we're ready for the real thing!" We pull the raft down to the water and climb **aboard**. The river pulls at the raft ... and we're away!

**bulky:** large or thick

*His grandma knitted him a bulky jersey.*

## Word Work

### Word Endings

help  
help  
help  
help

Turn to a partner.  
Use these words in a sentence.

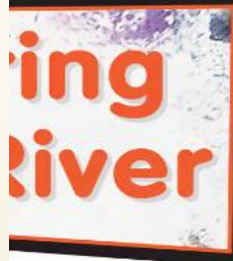


## Reflect on Learning

We have been learning about following a sequence of ideas in a procedural text. We have learnt that:

- to create a procedural text, ideas are drawn together (synthesised);
- sometimes the steps in a procedure are in a specific sequence;
- sometimes the author uses words such as "first", "next", and "then" to signal the beginning of each new step;
- thinking about activities we have done ourselves can help us understand how procedures are written.





**W**hite-water rafting is great fun, but keeping safe is important. One rafter explains how she gets ready for the ride of her life.

out on wetsuits. Mine's a tight fit, keep me warm when we hit the water.

he life jacket. It's **bulky**, in, the jacket will help me

the helmet. There are sharp rocks the white water. The rule is - lmet on at all times. Q

he dry-river run. We grab our pretend that the raft is on the ide helps us to get the feel of ther and explains the **commands** to help us steer the raft. B

**HOLD ON!**

"OK, now the real the raft er and e river ... and

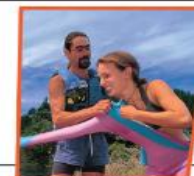


S

## Synthesising Sequence

1

E



2

E



3

E



4

E



5

E



# Rafting the River

**W**hite-water rafting is great fun, but keeping safe is important. One rafter explains how she gets ready for the ride of her life.

First we all put on wetsuits. Mine's a tight fit, but it will keep me warm when we hit the water.

Next comes the life jacket. It's **bulky**, but if I fall in, the jacket will help me to float.

Then there's the helmet. There are sharp rocks hidden under the white water. The rule is - keep your helmet on at all times.

Now comes the dry-river run. We grab our paddles and pretend that the raft is on the river. Our guide helps us to get the feel of working together and explains the **commands** he'll be using to help us steer the raft.

At last he yells, "OK, now we're ready for the real thing!" We pull the raft down to the water and climb **aboard**. The river pulls at the raft ... and we're away!



## Asking Questions

Author's Purpose

### Author's purpose

### Evidence

E

E

E

E

E

E

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### Think Aloud

Model thinking aloud for the students, focusing on the sequence words. For example:

*The girl getting ready for the raft ride seems to be doing things very carefully. When I read the words “first” and “next” it makes me think she is trying to do things in a particular sequence. I know that words like these are used in recipes, where synthesising the steps in order is very important. I’ll look for more words like these as I read the rest of the text.*

### Think, Pair, Share

Click on the icon. Ask the students to follow the instructions. When they have completed their discussion, ask several pairs of students to share their ideas with the group. They should focus on synthesising, or bringing together, information in a sequence and the language that indicates the beginning of each new step.

*Think of something you have done where bringing the steps together in the right sequence was important. Turn to a partner and talk about it. What words will you use to start each step? How does thinking about your experience help you understand Rafting the River?*

- How important is it that your steps were in order?
- What would happen if you got them in the wrong order?

Read the rest of the text to the students.

- What is a dry-river run?
- How would this help to prepare the group?
- Look at the people’s faces in the last photograph. Why do you think people go white-water rafting? (thrills, excitement, team challenge)

## Using the Graphic Organiser

Move to the next screen, which shows the text and the graphic organizer *Synthesising: Sequence*. Explain again to the students that *Rafting the River* describes a series of steps for staying safe while rafting.

- What other texts are written like this? (instruction manuals, recipes)
- What do we call this kind of text? (how-to texts)
- How do we know where the steps in the procedure begin? (signal words)

Remind the students about words such as “first”, “next”, and “now”. Drag and drop the first step into the text box on the graphic organiser. (First we all put on wetsuits.)

- Which image shows this step?

Drag that image into the image box for step 1.

- Bringing together information in the correct order like this is called synthesising.

Ask the students to identify the second step.

- What word gives you a clue? (Next)

Continue the discussion, identifying the steps of the text in order, and having the students drag and drop the text and the images into the appropriate boxes.

- Why is it important for the rafters to follow the steps of the procedure in the correct order?
- What might happen if they did the steps out of order?

### Reflect on Learning

Click on the icon. Read and discuss the text. Encourage the students to verbalise their understandings about synthesising and how they might transfer this learning to other situations.

*We have been learning about following a sequence of ideas in a procedural text. We have learnt that:*



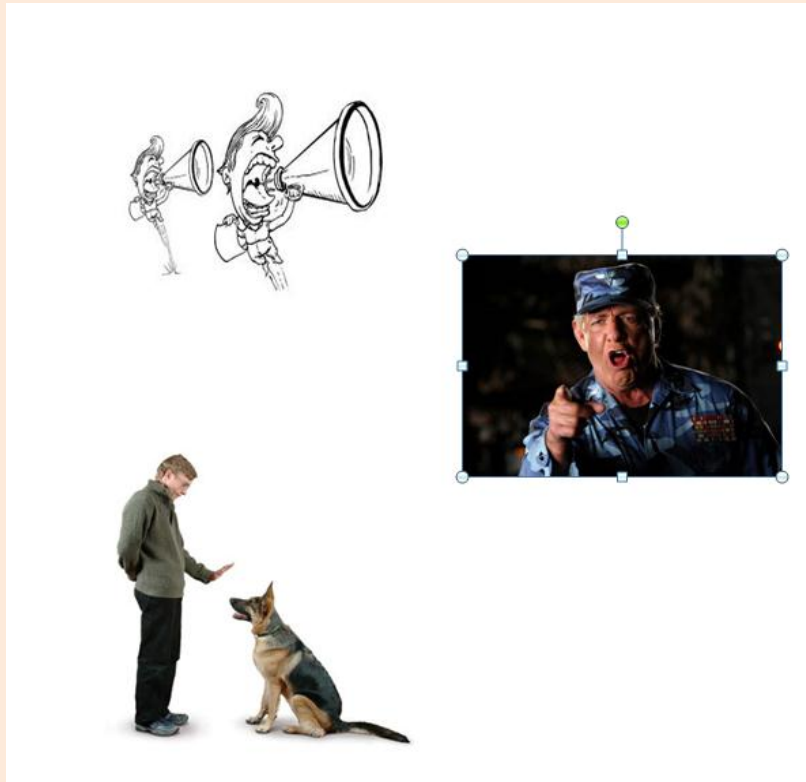
## **Activities which will promote language**

### **Generic open-ended activities Vs text patterning activities**

- Labelling
- Predict the vocabulary which will be in the text
- Text layout
- I wonder...
- Vocabulary scaffolds
- Compare & contrast- same and different
- Pronoun referencing
- Category activities



# Vocabulary Study



**Super Word Web**  
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

● **Sentence:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (word) \_\_\_\_\_

_____ _____ _____ _____ (synonyms)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 30px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 30px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 30px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; height: 30px;"></div> <div style="text-align: center;">(things that describe it)</div>
---	--

\_\_\_\_\_ (example) \_\_\_\_\_

# Dale Richards



Dale Richards is one of Australia's top young surfers. Some people say he is like a snake on the waves. One day he hopes to be world champion so he can surf in different countries around the world.

Dale was born in Townsville in Queensland in 1988. When he was eleven years old he hurt his leg playing football. This is why he decided to start surfing. He picked up surfing right away — other surfers said that he was a natural.

Throughout his time at school, Dale tried to surf every day. This was difficult because of homework, but he always got plenty of help and encouragement from his family and teachers.

Now that he has left school he can focus completely on surfing. He gets up at 4 am and surfs for eight hours each day.

- Make a connection
- Text layout
- Compare and Contrast  
*Dale Richards Vs Self*
- Language study  
“like a snake on the waves”  
“picked up surfing”  
“he was a natural”  
“can focus completely”
- I wonder...
- Summarise (shrink the text)



# Other useful resources which will encourage language:

National Geographic Magazine —differentiated reading levels on same topic

Comprehension and Writing Response Centres

SMART website – item analysis. Stimulus.

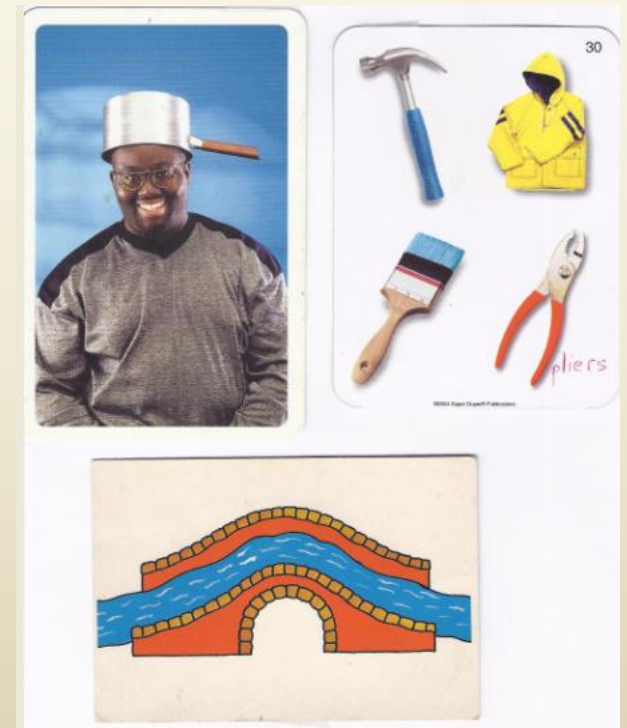
Google images

Odd one out cards/ category activities

Funny picture cards

Idiom cards

Inferences activities



scale - SMART Notebook

File Edit View Insert Format Draw Help

Groups

Group 1

Apr 14-3:48 PM

a tool to measure weight

cars  
people  
bags  
food

musical notes

covering on a fish or reptile

used on a map to show distances

Verbal Scale

1 in. = 1,485 mi  
1 cm = 940 km

Representative fraction

$\frac{1}{94,000,000}$

Small scale

1 in. = 585 mi  
1 cm = 370 km

$\frac{1}{37,000,000}$

1 in. = 250 mi  
1 cm = 160 km

$\frac{1}{16,000,000}$

Large scale

1 in. = 20 mi  
1 cm = 13 km

$\frac{1}{1,300,000}$

scale

a measuring tool

0 NO HURT  
1 HURTS A LITTLE BIT  
2 HURTS A LITTLE MORE  
3 HURTS EVEN MORE  
4 HURTS A WHOLE LOT  
5 HURTS WORST

to climb up

Extend Page

# Professional resources:

- ❑ NSW Centre for Effective Reading

*Professional learning*

- ❑ MUSEC briefings – useful for parents too

- ❑ Focus on Reading

- ❑ Revisit, Reflect , Retell     *Linda Hoyt*



## The Listening Program®

Jennifer Stephenson and Kevin Wheldall

### Statement of the Problem

Many people have problems with cognitive, emotional and social skills. Advocates of this program also recommend it for children with autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, learning disabilities and AD/HD.

### Proposed Solution/ Intervention

Use of The Listening Program® is claimed to result in a wide range of effects, including improvements in reading, communication, learning, memory, balance, co-ordination, sensory processing, creativity and intuition. The intervention is implemented by having people listen to modified classical music recorded on a CD or iPod through headphones for 15 minutes once or twice a day for 5 days per week. The program is provided at different levels, each level purportedly having different effects.

### The theoretical rationale – how does it work?

It is claimed that the effects are achieved through the exercise that the music provides to the brain, and specifically to the auditory processing system. It is also claimed to regulate the middle ear muscles. Proponents claim that remediation of distorted auditory perception caused by illness, injury, or developmental disability brings about the wide range of improvements. The theoretical rationale is based on theories that particular sound frequencies affect particular brain functions, and that listening to sounds delivered to the ear by both air and bone conduction is beneficial.

### What does the research say? What is the evidence for its efficacy?

The evidence base for the efficacy of this program is very slight and is composed largely of unpublished pilot studies purporting to offer evidence of efficacy. There is only one study published in a refereed journal. The researchers claimed an improvement in language and functional behaviour and reduced sensory sensitivity for one 5-year-old boy with pervasive developmental disorder. Improvements due to concurrent speech therapy and school attendance could not be excluded. There are no research studies published in refereed journals documenting effects on older children and adults, or on academic skills such as reading.

### Conclusions

As for other interventions for children based on listening to music, there is little evidence to support the claims made. Similar interventions have been shown to be ineffective (the Mozart effect) or the research does not meet scientific standards that would allow for claims of effectiveness (auditory integration therapies). Such programs should be able to offer empirical research evidence for efficacy considerably in excess of a single case study.

### Alternative Options

Instructional programs based on accepted scientific research and designed specifically to address a problematic issue are far more likely to be effective than generic remedies.

### The MUSEC verdict

Not recommended

Key references may be found at:  
[http://www.musec.mq.edu.au/co\\_brief.aspx](http://www.musec.mq.edu.au/co_brief.aspx)



## Fast ForWord® Language

Genevieve McArthur

### Statement of the Problem

Around 5% of children have significant problems learning to read or learning how to speak their native language.

### Proposed Solution/ Intervention

Fast ForWord® Language is designed to help children's reading and spoken language by training their memory, attention, processing, and sequencing. Children train for 3 to 5 days per week, for 8 to 12 weeks.

### The theoretical rationale – how does it work?

Fast ForWord® claims to develop four cognitive skills that improve learning, language, and reading: (1) memory (the ability to store information and ideas); (2) attention (the ability to focus on information and tasks, and ignore distractions); (3) processing rate (the rate at which a student is able to accurately perceive and manipulate information); and (4) sequencing (placing the detail of information in its accustomed order).

### What does the research say? What is the evidence for its efficacy?

Strong, Torgerson, Torgerson, and Hulme (2010) have conducted the most recent systematic review of peer-reviewed randomised control trials and matched group comparison studies (equivalent baselines) of Fast ForWord®. Effects were assessed for single word reading, passage reading comprehension, expressive language, and receptive language. The effect sizes for each of the four skills were

not statistically significant from 0. The studies reviewed were methodologically sound, and had moderate to large sample sizes. Thus, they had the power to detect even a small reliable effect, if it was present.

### Conclusions

The systematic review found no sign of a reliable effect of Fast ForWord® on reading or on expressive or receptive spoken language.

### Alternative Options

Research suggests that children with reading impairments benefit from intensive instruction in phonics (for words that follow the letter-sound rules, like bat) and in reading words by sight (for words that violate the letter-sound rules, like yacht). Children with spoken language impairments should make modest but reliable improvements with intensive, one-to-one training by speech and language therapists.

### The MUSEC verdict

Not recommended

NOTE: This Briefing is an update of MUSEC Briefing 16 (December, 2008).

Key references may be found at:  
[http://www.musec.mq.edu.au/community/outreach/musec\\_briefings/](http://www.musec.mq.edu.au/community/outreach/musec_briefings/)

Macquarie University Special Education Centre  
Building X5A, Macquarie University NSW 2109  
Ph: 9850 8691 Fax: 9850 8254



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# Writing = getting blood out of a stone!

Plan the scaffold.

Laminate for each student.

Teach explicitly – word banks

- ideas banks

- colour code

each section of text

Practise and practise

It takes a long time!

Introduction	
1. State your opinion 2. There are a number of reasons why this is true. 3. State 3 main ideas	

Argument 1	
<b>One reason</b>	Main idea plus 2 elaborations

Argument 2	
<b>Also</b>	Main idea plus 2 elaborations

Argument 3	
<b>In addition</b>	Main idea plus 2 elaborations

Conclusion	
<b>In summary,</b>	repeat 3 main ideas

Words used to express different degrees of meaning.

Low modality	Medium modality	High modality
I <u>might</u> go	I <u>could</u> go.	I <u>must</u> go
may	possible	will
maybe	can	certain
perhaps	possibility	certainly
hopefully	probably	certainty
possibly	sometimes	always
seldom	should	surely
rarely	usually	definite
occasionally	often	definitely
		regularly
		never
		positively

# Maths

- Make connections
- Visualising
- Mind mapping
- Specific vocabulary  
“talk like a mathematician”
- Show visible evidence of improvement



# Part 3: Reflection & note to self

Record on the front page of handout

